

## Introduction

The concept of the vampire has changed throughout the years. There is a huge difference between how the vampire was perceived during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and how the vampire is perceived and thus presented nowadays throughout literature. Joseph Campbell, a scholar, suggests that the way in which we view vampires and mythology and how it changes over time is there to meet the needs of society and how we internalize the world around us (Campbell, 1973). As society has changed throughout the years, so too have we been viewing vampires and what they mean to us in different ways throughout time.

In the past, vampires were surrounded in mystery and in fear. They were believed to morph and change into different animals like wolves, rats and spiders. They were thought to have no soul and therefore could not see themselves in the mirror or cast any shadows. Once they drank the blood of humans, some thought that they were capable of animating the dead bodies and making them do what the vampires wanted.

Some people believed that unless invited into the home, vampires were not capable of entering. They also were believed to be incapable of entering holy places since they were servants of the devil. It isn't entirely certain where the word *vampire* came about; either from the Turkish *uber* – witch, the Greek word 'to drink', a Slavic beginning from the word *bamiup* or perhaps from the Hungarian *vampir* (Wilson, 1985). Vampires were used as scapegoats to explain away anything villagers could not understand or explain in Eastern Europe and therefore, have come to represent the 'other' (Orlomoski, 2011).

In today's culture, thoughts and ideas surrounding the vampire has completely changed. Vampires have popped up everywhere in pop culture, television and books and now people aspire secretly to be a vampire. Vampires are ageless, with reserved appearance, health and cognition. In addition, vampires get to live forever. For these reasons, people admire vampires and the associated vampire stories. One of the famous and favorite books nowadays where vampires are presented in a unique way is *Twilight*. *Twilight* is a book that has become extremely popular (more than 17 million copies of the book were sold and it was translated into 38 languages).

In this document, I am going to discuss about the changes that occurred in the perception of how people view the character of the vampire through literature. In addition, I will show why vampires became so popular. There are different ideas that have evolved throughout vampire literature and how they are portrayed in pop culture. This work will discuss these ideas and use popular examples to explain and support the different approaches involved.

### The History of Vampires

Many people believe that vampires are real while others claim that someone made them up. Research show that both believers and non-believers see vampires as 'un-dead', extending their lives by unnatural ways such as drinking the blood of the living, however this is the only description that they both agree about. For years vampires have hunted humanity across the world. The first knowledge of a vampire is from a Hebrew text about Lilith, a woman that chose a life of exile instead of living with her husband. Later she returned as a vampire-like witch who sucks the blood from children (Montague, 1991).